

**Project title: The Economic Value Associated with Substitution Away from
Yellowstone National Park as a Unique Recreation Site**

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Objective: Specific objectives of this research are to: 1) Complete a survey of snowmobilers using Yellowstone National Park which addresses their substitution to another site subject to YNP being closed to snowmobile use; 2) estimate a random utility model (RUM) from the survey data that estimates probabilities of potential use of substitute sites and changes in recreation benefits associated with those substitutions; and 3) compare actual substitution to stated preference responses regarding estimated probabilities and benefits in a random utility model of recreation demand.

Findings: Intercept sampling of snowmobilers entering Yellowstone National Park between December 20, 2001 and February 28, 2002 was completed. The West, South and East entrances were sampled on 34 dates during the above time period. Dates were chosen randomly for both week and weekend days during the period. An equal number of week and weekend days were sampled during that period. The total number of days each entrance was sampled was based on proportion of snowmobile visitation during the 2000–2001 winter recreation season. A total of 1,280 visitors were intercepted and asked if they would participate in a survey regarding their snowmobile use. There was a refusal rate of 9.5% during the intercept sampling. Those agreeing to participate were entered into a database. A modified Dillman survey design was started with the first mailing on March 4, 2002, and a postcard follow-up reminder sent out on March 11, 2002. The third and final survey mailing will occur on April 1, 2002. As of the submission of this report 483 surveys out of 1,148 have been received. Data entry, analysis and the submission of our findings will occur by the end of November this year.

Project title: Visitor Experience and Media Effectiveness

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Objective: National parks preserve irreplaceable natural and cultural resources. These parks and resources provide educational, inspirational, and recreational experiences for tens of millions of visitors each year. Understanding how interpretive media (e.g., exhibits, audiovisual presentations, brochures, and maps) contribute to visitor satisfaction and resource protection will help the National Park Service improve the effectiveness of interpretive media and the quality of visitor experiences. The purpose of the proposed research is to develop a basic understanding of how visitors' differing needs and desires act in combination with media experiences to influence visitors' satisfaction, and practical methodologies that can be used in the future to design and evaluate media that will better achieve visitor experience and resource protection objectives.

Findings: Data collection has been completed. The data is currently being analyzed.

**Project title: From Juno to Toby: Policy, Culture, and the
Historical Narrative of the Yellowstone Bear**

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Objective: 1) To determine the importance of seeing a bear to the overall quality of today's visitor experience, 2) to assess attitudes toward bear feeding, and 3) toward seeing research tools such as satellite collars and ear tags being worn by park wildlife.

Findings: 1) In response to an open-ended question, about half of all 150 visitors surveyed named bears as one of the top three sights they wanted to see in Yellowstone, second only to Old Faithful. Seeing a bear was ranked as being of only average importance to the overall quality of experience, however, indicating that visitors would like to see bears but are not excessively disappointed if they do not. 2) 95% of survey respondents claimed that they would not want to feed a Yellowstone bear. 3) 83% of visitors surveyed said that seeing a collared animal in Yellowstone either "had not" or "would not" affect their experience of viewing that animal. Some respondents actually expressed interest and/or pleasure at the idea because they supported research for conservation purposes (their reasoning). This seems to indicate that the long-held notion that allowing wildlife to be collared and otherwise marked for research purposes is disruptive to the visitor experience is based on incorrect assumptions about park visitors.